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General and complete disarmament: transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities

China, Russian Federation and United States of America: draft resolution

Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 60/66 of 8 December 2005, 61/75 of 6 December 2006, 62/43 of 5 December 2007, 63/68 of 2 December 2008, 64/49 of 2 December 2009, 65/68 of 8 December 2010, 68/50 of 5 December 2013, 69/38 of 2 December 2014, 70/53 of 7 December 2015, 71/42 of 5 December 2016 and 71/90 of 22 December 2016, as well as its decision 66/517 of 2 December 2011,

Recalling also the report of the Secretary-General of 15 October 1993 to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, the annex to which contains the study by governmental experts on the application of confidence-building measures in outer space,[1]

Reaffirming the right of all countries to explore and use outer space in accordance with international law,

Reaffirming also that preventing an arms race in outer space is in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and is an essential condition for the promotion and strengthening of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes,

Recalling, in this context, its resolutions 45/55 B of 4 December 1990 and 48/74 B of 16 December 1993, in which, inter alia, it recognized the need for increased transparency and confirmed the importance of confidence-building measures as a means of reinforcing the objective of preventing an arms race in outer space,

Noting the constructive debates that the Conference on Disarmament has held on this subject and the views expressed by Member States,

[1] A/48/305 and A/48/305/Corr.1.

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Noting also the introduction by China and the Russian Federation at the Conference on Disarmament of the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects,[2] and the submission of its updated version[3] in 2014,

Noting further that, since 2004, several States[4] have introduced a policy of not being the first State to place weapons in outer space,

Noting with satisfaction the proposal put forward by China, the Russian Federation and the United States of America to include in the agenda of the Disarmament Commission an additional item relating to the practical implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities, with the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space,

Noting the presentation by the European Union of a draft of a non-legally binding international code of conduct for outer space activities,

Recognizing the work that takes place within the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and its Legal Subcommittee, which makes a significant contribution to the promotion of the long-term sustainability of outer space activities,

Noting the contribution of Member States that have submitted to the Secretary-General concrete proposals on international outer space transparency and confidence-building measures pursuant to paragraph 1 of resolution 61/75, paragraph 2 of resolution 62/43, paragraph 2 of resolution 63/68 and paragraph 2 of resolution 64/49,

Welcoming the work done in 2012 and 2013 by the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities, which was convened by the Secretary-General, on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, to conduct a study on outer space transparency and confidence-building measures,

Noting the consideration of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts,[5] as well as views on the modalities of making practical use of the recommendations contained therein, as set out in the report of the Committee on its fifty-eighth session, held in 2015,[6] at which it found that the Committee had a fundamental role to play in enhancing transparency and confidence-building among States, as well as in ensuring that outer space is maintained for peaceful purposes,

Noting also that, in its report, the Group of Governmental Experts recognized the value of the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in developing a set of voluntary, non-legally binding guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, some of which could be considered as potential transparency and confidence-building measures, while others could enhance the safety of outer space activities and thereby provide the technical basis for the further implementation of additional transparency and confidence-building measures,

Taking note of the special report by the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities (UN-Space) on the implementation of the report of the Group of

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[2] See CD/1839.

[3] See CD/1985.

[4] Argentina, Armenia, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Viet Nam.

[5] A/68/189.

[6] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventieth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/70/20).

Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities, and the recommendations contained therein, as submitted to the Committee at its fifty-ninth session, in 2016,[7]

Welcoming resolution 186 of 7 November 2014 of the International Telecommunication Union on "Strengthening the role of the International Telecommunication Union with regard to transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities", adopted by the 2014 Plenipotentiary Conference of the Union, held in Busan, Republic of Korea, from 20 October to 7 November 2014,

1. *Stresses* the importance of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities,[7] considered by the General Assembly on 5 December 2013;

2. *Encourages* Member States to continue to review and implement, to the greatest extent practicable, the proposed transparency and confidence-building measures contained in the report, through the relevant national mechanisms, on a voluntary basis and in a manner consistent with the national interests of Member States;

3. *Also encourages* Member States, in accordance with the recommendations contained in the report, with a view to promoting the practical implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures, to hold regular discussions in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament on the prospects for their implementation;

4. *Requests* the relevant entities and organizations of the United Nations system, to which, in accordance with its resolution 68/50, the report was circulated, to assist in effectively implementing the conclusions and recommendations contained therein, as appropriate;

5. *Encourages* the relevant entities and organizations of the United Nations system to coordinate, as appropriate, on matters related to the recommendations contained in the report;

6. *Welcomes* the joint ad hoc meetings of the First and Fourth Committees, held on 22 October 2015 and 12 October 2017, on possible challenges to space security and sustainability, convened in accordance with the report and its resolutions 69/38 and 71/90, and the substantive exchanges of opinions on various aspects of security in outer space that took place during the meetings;

7. *Calls upon* Member States and the relevant entities and organizations of the United Nations system to support the implementation of the full range of conclusions and recommendations contained in the report;

8. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities in the United Nations system, which contains summaries of the submissions received from Member States giving their views on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities,[8]

9. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-third session, under the item entitled "General and complete disarmament", the sub-item entitled "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities".

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[7] A/AC.105/1116.

[8] A/72/65 and A/72/65/Add.1.